

*SONGS
OF THE
WAR*

Joseph Waddington Graves





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Songs of the War

BY

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INDEX

	PAGE
I. 'A SCRAP OF PAPER'	3
II. 'THE ENGLISH'	5
III. 'THE DIFFERENCE'	8
IV. 'A HOLY WAR'	10
V. 'EAGER TO GO'	10
VI. 'THE HERO-LAND'	13
VII. 'LUSITANIA'	15
VIII. 'THE CROSS AND THE WAR'	17
IX. 'GOD PUNISH ENGLAND'	20

Songs of the War

'ONLY A SCRAP OF PAPER'

'Only a scrap of paper,'
Cried the haughty Prussian lord,
'What matters a written promise
Compared with strife and the sword?'
But an Empire's sons made answer,
'We can fight, we have fought before,'
And because of a 'scrap of paper'
There is half a world at war.

'Only a scrap of paper,
Come forward and name your price,
Be it treaties, lands, or commerce,
We will make the sacrifice.'
But the bribe was with scorn rejected,
As the threat had been before,
And because of a 'scrap of paper'
There is half a world at war.

' Only a scrap of paper !
Why squander British lives,
Why follow the trail of horror,
With weeping children and wives ? '
God knows the price is heavy,
It fills the soul with awe !
Yet because of a ' scrap of paper '
There is half a world at war.

Oh, not for the lust of conquest,
And not for the greed of gain,
It is just to keep her honour,
That Britain's sons lie slain.
It is only a ' scrap of paper,'
But it's signed with Britain's name,
The promise kept spells Honour,
The promise broken—Shame !

Some day when on page of history
The truth of these days is told,
We shall find it a chapter of glory,
Recorded in letters of gold.
We'll rejoice that we kept the promise,
Though the heavy price was war ;
For though only a ' scrap of paper '
It was Britain's name it bore.

And if the Recording Angel,
In that land where Angels sing,
Keeps an Honour Roll of Nations
In the archives of the King,
Then through all the countless ages
Will be shown in Heaven's lore
How just for a 'scrap of paper'
An Empire went to war.

'THE ENGLISH'

(WHAT CANADA THINKS)

To Canada's strand from the old home-
land,
Across the Atlantic foam,
To East and West comes England's
best
To carve out a life and a home.
Right welcome they've been as they've
gathered,
But never so much as to-day.
What do we think of the English?
What are we going to say?

Oh, whether we're Anglo-Canadian,
Or born in the Maple Land,
We are proud of the fighting English,
Heroic and daring and grand.
We doff to the Mother Country,
And follow where she may lead,
For Justice is England's motto,
And Honour is England's creed.

What do we think of the English,
Midst the shrapnel, shot, and shell,
Seeking close grips with the foeman,
Like storming the forts of hell,
Bearing the brunt of the struggle,
Just going, not asking 'how,'
Paying the price without murmur,
What think we of England now?

What would we think of the English,
Supposing they'd shirked the fight,
And skulked while the French and
Belgians
Were crushed by the German might?

What do we think of England
For having once more rung true,
And added fresh tints of glory
To the old red, white, and blue?

.

He is facing the hellish howitzers,
He is looking death square in the
eyes,
He is one of the fighting English ;
If the price is his death—well, he dies.
He is fighting for Empire and glory,
And what are we going to say ?
What do we think of the English ?
Why, the English are heroes to-day !

And so in the days before us
When the long, long peace shall dawn,
We'll remember England's glory,
And honour the English born.
Then her sons who cross our borders
Will be welcomed with outstretched
hand,
For they come from a race of stalwarts,
And we're proud of the old homeland.

Yes, we'll always have room for the
English

When past are the days of the sword,
We'll give them the glad hand gladly
In town or on prairie broad.

For to-day we all are brothers,
And from East to West we hear,
' Hats off to the fighting English !
Hats off and a three-times cheer ! '

' THE DIFFERENCE '

THE ONE

Nero is dead, but Nero lives,
Savagery on a throne,
The claws of the tiger are tearing,
Maskless, the Real is shown ;
Barbaric and ruthless and cunning,
Honourless, faithless, unjust,
Crazed with conceits of power,
Mad with ambition's lust.

At the bar of honest judgement,
At the bar of brotherhood,

In the name of all that's sacred,
In the name of all that's good ;
You stand accursed and guilty,
Stern judgement has been set,
And sure as God is justice,
Stern judgement will be met.

THE OTHER

Offered rich bribes, yet refusing,
Threatened, yet undismayed,
Paying without a murmur
A price that needn't be paid.
Suffering for sake of a promise,
Gallant and unafraid,
Wearing the halo of honour,
Doing what duty bade.

At the bar of honest judgement,
At the bar of brotherhood,
In the name of all that's sacred,
In the name of all that's good ;
Your wounds are those of honour,
And rich shall prove their worth,
Righteousness still exalteth
The nations of the earth.

'A HOLY WAR'

The hand that was nailed is mailed
to-day,
The Christ hath unsheathed the sword,
And men to a Holy War go forth,
Led on by their fighting Lord.

'Not peace, but a sword I come to
bring.'

So ploughshares are turned to swords,
And the Allies' flags o'er the battle-line
Are the Master's Scourge of Cords.

'EAGER TO GO'

Eager to go. Why? Why?
When going means forsaking
Home and friends, and all that dearest
seems,
Position, comfort, and farewelling
All fond ambition's dreams.
Eager to go. Why? Why?

Eager to go. Why? Why?
When eager means, perhaps,
Eager to die, eager for pain,
Eager perhaps to travel down the
Western slope [gained.

Before the peak of life's full strength is
Eager to go. Why? Why?

Eager to go. Why? Why?
Have all life's sweets proved bitter to
the tongue?

Does hope lie slain? [hours,
Has evening's gloom attended morning
And life held only shattered plans and
longings vain?

Eager to go. Why? Why?
.

Not that! Not that!
Nay, rather say that life is beauteous
with roseate hues,
And life has sweetest fragrance when
the ground
Is drenched with morning dews;
And yet, and yet,
Eager to go.

Eager to go. Why not?

When coming ages will proclaim them
men

Who stood against the foe,

When coming ages will declaim against
The one who could but would not go.

Eager to go. Why not?

Eager to go. Why not?

When brother men are broken, bleeding,
And their wounds are for *my* sake,

Who would not eager be the side of
suffering right to take?

Eager to go. Why not?

Eager to go. Why not?

Can we forget sad Belgium's brave
vicarious grief?

Forget Louvain?

In just a few short days forget her
ravished homes,

Her noble slain?

Eager to go. Why not?

Eager to go. Why not?

When mighty foes are drinking to
Of Britain's fall ; ['The Day']
Shall we not, for dear Empire's sake,
Hear and obey the call ?

Eager to go. Why not ?

Eager to go. Why not ?

When we believe the path of battle
Is to-day the path to God ;
When we believe the Voice that calls us
Is the voice of our Eternal Lord.

Eager to go. Why not, when God and
duty call ?

Yes, yes, thank God—*eager* to go.

'THE HERO-LAND'

'Albert, King of Belgium, hasten,
Open wide your country's gates.
Your fair land shall be our highway ;
See, the mighty Prussian waits.'
But the King and nation answered,
'Hark ye, Belgium's sons are *free*,
And let God on high be witness,
Freemen, aye, we mean to be.'

Refrain—

Hail to the Hero-Nation !

Hail to the Hero-King !

Albert, thy name we honour,

Belgium, thy praise we sing.

' Albert, King of Belgium, listen :
Precious gifts we will bestow,
Gifts of land and gifts of commerce,
Many costly favours show.'
But the King and Nation answered,
' These are but the toys of earth ;
Belgium's honour far excels them,
Her fair name is greater worth.'

Hail, &c.

' Albert, King of Belgium, tremble !
Devastating blows will fall,
Prussian might will crush and cripple ;
Block our path—you lose your all.'
But the King and Nation answered,
' Take of lives and land your toll,
But when Prussian worst is ended,
Belgium still retains her soul.'

Hail, &c.

'LUSITANIA'

Queen of the far-spread ocean,
Sovereign of restless wave,
Skimming the calm,
Riding the storm,
Graceful and fleet and brave.
Honoured and loved and trusted,
Long shall her fame abide,
Pride of the seas,
Queen of the breeze,
Regent of ocean wide.

Shame on the hand that struck her!
Shame on the blow that fell!
Not Nature's hate
Decreed her fate,
But a thought that was born in
hell;
God's gift was calm and sunshine,
Soft breeze and the gentle wave,
But Hate's demand
Was Love outplanned,
And a cruel ocean grave.

Queen of the far-spread ocean,
This is your lasting fame :
You dared the foe
That lurked below,
And scorned a coward's shame ;
You heard the foeman threaten,
You knew his skill and hate,
But Duty's word
You also heard,
And met a glorious fate.

Mourn for the toll of slaughter,
Mourn for the honoured slain,
But time will show,
And all will know,
The price was not in vain ;
For men the wide world over
Have marvelled as they've seen
The heavy price
Of sacrifice
Paid by the ocean queen.

Queen of the far-spread ocean,
You are calling to us to-day :
'Stand by the right,
Stand to the fight,

British you are for aye.
Fight though a Kinsale Head be yours,
Fight till the world you thrill.'
This is your call.
Answer we all :
' Queen of the seas—we will ! '

' THE CROSS AND THE WAR '

Two thousand years since the Christ
King died,
And left as His sign the Cross,
That men might find on the Christ-
trod road
True life, through death and loss.
They mockingly cried as He hung on
the tree :
' Himself He cannot save.'
They uttered the truth, for the way of
the Christ
Is ever the Cross and grave.

Once more vile hands have upreared
the Cross,
And Belgium is crucified,

Is dying the death of grief and pain,
While antichrists deride.

The stricken Belgium is very Christ,
By a caitiff's kiss betrayed ;
But Belgium will have an Easter Morn,
And a glory that ne'er shall fade.

And all who are bearing Belgium's Cross,
British and Serb and French,
Russian and Jap, on battle-line,
In hospital base and trench,
In training camp and ambulance corps,
On warship and submarine—
These are treading to-day the Calvary
road,
The road that the Christ has been.

Nor are these all ; but the multitude
Of women who whispered, ' Go,'
Though the heart was torn and the
hearth forlorn,
And the brave voice faltered so ;
And the little child who sobs for ' Dad,'
And the aged one who mourns—
These know the gloom of Gethsemane,
And the weight of the Crown of Thorns.

Yes, the Prussian Pilate has said the
'Take Him and crucify,' [word,
And Christ is wearing a khaki coat,
As again He goes to die.

He stands once more in Pretorium Hall,
His sufferings, who can tell ?
He faces a cursing, spitting mob,
And the spit is the spleen of hell.

With deadened heart and blinded eye,
To the writing on the wall,
The Hun is taking his toll of blood,
And fierce does his vengeance fall ;
And the weakest ones must share the
blows

From a brutal Teuton force,
While the world's elect are sacrificed
On a Hohenzollern cross.

But after the Night the Dawn will come,
And the joy of the Empty Grave,
And a risen world will immortalize
Her heroes, true and brave.

Then a new new world will accept the
Creed

That *truth* is a nation's might,
And a new new world will scorn the lie
That force is the only right.

Not Superman, but Brother-man,
In the world that is soon to be,
And men will speak of the Greatest
War

As 'The War that Made Men Free,'
For the thunder-roll of drums to-day,
And the holocaust of War,
Mean the world-wide sway of the Cross
of Christ,
And *its* triumph evermore.

'GOD PUNISH ENGLAND'

[Instead of the conventional 'Good-day,' the present formula of salutation in use in Germany is 'Gott strafe England' ('God punish England'), which is replied to with 'Gott mog'es strafen' ('May God punish her').]

'God punish England.' These words
of salutation

Echo to-day through Germany's
domain,

In humble village home, in mansion
stately;

On crowded city street, on country lane;
Wherever two men meet or crowds
assemble,

Only this word of greeting or farewell,
Hissed through the teeth of child and
youth and aged,

This 'Hassegesang' refrain, this bitter
knell—

'Oh, may God punish England.'

'Yes, may God punish her.'

'God punish England.' Yes, if she is
traitor,

Breaking her bond, when so to do means
gain,

Holding her treaties as mere 'scraps
of paper,'

Willing that truth and honour shall lie
slain.

If she has made a shambles of a nearby
garden,

Driving with hate her Juggernaut of
Might,
Crushing a hero-land by greater num-
bers,
Turning the joy of day to sorrow's
night—
Then ' May God punish England.'
' Yes, may God punish her.'

' God punish England.' Yes, if she is
vandal,
Wanton of church and monument and
home ;
If, for a target, using cherished steeple,
Stately cathedral wall, and hallowed
dome ;
If Halls of Art and Colleges of Learning
Alike receive her fierce destroying
rage ;
If she forgets the claims of beauty,
skill, and wisdom,
And ravages the treasures of an age—
Then ' May God punish England.'
' Yes, may God punish her.'

'God punish England.' Yes, if she is
vampire,
Craving for blood as misers crave for
gain,
If she regards the aged one as fitting
victim,
And by her ruthless hand a babe lies
slain ;
If she forgets the sanctity of childhood,
Or deadens heart to sight of helpless
need,
If womanhood no longer spells pro-
tection,
If naught remains to her but hate and
greed—
Then 'May God punish England.'
'Yes, may God punish her.'

.

These are the bitter words of salutation
Hissed through the teeth of Britain's
foes to-day ;
But God on high is watching, knowing,
waiting.
'Vengeance is mine,' said God, 'I will
repay.'

Not by a nation's prayers, but by her
actions,

Thus shall the Vengeance or Reward
be made.

Matters it not who prays 'God punish
England.'

England, with hands unstained, is
unafraid.

For what avails the foeman's words of
passion,

If Britain's sons unite her name to
bless,

If fiercest curse but calls forth more
affection,

And angry blow is followed by caress?

Why fret that men should pray 'God
punish England'

When those who know her best their
love-songs bring,

And with one voice her sons and
daughters answer,

'God save our Empire and God bless
our King'?

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